

Amendment to the Claims

1. (original) A computer implemented method of predicting the likelihood of collecting on a delinquent debt on an account, the method comprising:

5 storing a predictive model of debt collection likelihood generated using historical data of delinquent debt accounts, the collection methods used in each account, and the success of the collection methods in each account;

receiving data of a currently delinquent debt account;

selecting a collection method; and

10 generating a signal indicative of the likelihood of collecting on the currently delinquent debt by applying the data of the currently delinquent debt account and the selected collection method to the predictive model.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the delinquent debt was incurred on a credit card.

3. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the delinquent debt was incurred on a medical service.

20 4. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the delinquent debt was incurred on a utility bill.

5. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the delinquent debt was incurred on an unpaid check.

6. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the delinquent debt was incurred on mail-ordered goods.

5 7. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the delinquent debt was incurred on an electronic transaction via the Internet.

8. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the delinquent debt has been charged-off.

10 9. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collection methods include a set of different letters that can be sent to delinquent debtors.

10. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collection methods include different times at which a letter can be sent to delinquent debtors.

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11. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collection methods include different phone call approaches.

12. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collection methods include different
20 debt lifecycle stages when phone calls may be made.

13. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collection methods include different debt lifecycle stages at which a letter can be sent to delinquent debtors.

14. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collection methods include different days of the week during which phone calls may be made.

15. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collection methods include different
5 monthly dates during which phone calls may be made.

16. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collection methods include different hours of the day during which phone calls may be made.

17. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collection methods include different
10 collections specialists who may be assigned to work the account.

18. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collection methods include electronic communications that may be made with the debtor.

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19. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collection methods include offering debt counselling.

20. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collection methods include debt
20 rescheduling.

21. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collection methods include offering additional credit.

22. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collection methods include changing delinquency financial penalties for an account.

23. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collection methods include offering debt forgiveness.

24. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collection methods include a search for a missing debtor.

25. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collection methods include legal actions.

26. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collection methods include the employment of a collection agency.

27. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the collection methods include the sale of a debt.

28. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the historical data includes information regarding an account before the account became delinquent.

29. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the historical data includes account purchase information.

30. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the historical data includes information regarding the Merchant Category Code of purchases on the account.

31. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the historical data includes information
5 regarding the amount of account purchases.

32. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the historical data includes information regarding account cash transactions.

10 33. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the historical data includes information regarding account payments made.

34. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the historical data includes events related to previous collection activities.

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35. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the historical data includes collectors' notes related to previous collection activities.

36. (original) The method of claim 35, wherein the collectors' notes use preformatted
20 codes.

37. (original) The method of claim 35, wherein the collectors' notes use a natural language format.

38. (original) The method of claim 35, further comprising:

transforming the collectors' notes into a mathematical representation that encodes contextual similarity of terms contained in the collector's notes.

5 39. (original) The method of claim 38, further comprising creating the mathematical representation using a vector model.

40. (original) The method of claim 38, further comprising creating the mathematical representation by determining co-occurrence statistics of terms contained in the collector's notes.

41. (original) The method of claim 38, wherein the mathematical representation is created using context vector methodology.

15 42. (original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
segmenting a portfolio of accounts into a plurality of segments; and
providing a different predictive model for each segment.

43. (original) The method of claim 42, wherein each segment is based on the time period for which an account has been delinquent.

44. (original) The method of claim 42, wherein each segment is based on the creditworthiness of the holder of a delinquent debt account.

45. (original) The method of claim 42, wherein each segment is based on the type of debt of an account.

46. (original) The method of claim 42, wherein each segment is based on the history of collection activities for an account.

47. (currently amended) The method of claim 42, wherein each segment is based on a statistical clustering of accounts having similar ~~characteristics~~ characteristics.

48. (original) The method of claim 42, wherein each segment is based on the amount owed on an account.

49. (original) The method of claim 42, wherein each segment is based on the collectors' notes for an account.

50. (original) The method of claim 42, wherein each segment is based on a determination of whether a debt on an account has been charged-off.

51. (original) The method of claim 42, wherein each segment is based on the number of collection agencies that have attempted to collect on the debt account.

Claims 52-136. (canceled)